

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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R 141655Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5215
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 4876

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SHUM PGOV CI
SUBJECT: PINOCHET RESISTING PRESSURES TO SPEED UP REFORMATION

REF: SANTIAGO 4258

1. SUMMARY: MANY MILITARY AND CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS OF
THE GOC SHOW SIGNS OF WANTING TO PICK UP THE SLOW PACE
OF "INSTITUTIONALIZATION" -- THE LOCAL EUPHEMISM FOR
PASSING BEYOND THE STAGE OF RULE BY EMERGENCY AUTHORITY
AND PUTTING INTO EFFECT WHATEVER CHILE'S NEW AUTHORI-
TARIAN DEMOCRACY IS TO BE. JUDGING FROM TWO RECENT
SPEECHES, PRESIDENT PINOCHET THINKS IT WILL BE MANY
YEARS BEFORE ANY NATIONAL ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD AND
EVEN LONGER BEFORE "NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION" IS
COMPLETED. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, HE SEEMS EAGER
TO PRESS AHEAD WITH A CONSTITUTIONAL ACT DEFINING
EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE POWERS AS MODIFIED DURING
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THE THREE PLUS YEARS OF THE JUNTA. THIS PROCESS HAS
ALREADY GIVEN RISE TO TENSIONS WITHIN THE JUNTA AND
THE MILITARY. INDICATIVE OF POSSIBLE TIMETABLES, THE
GOC ANNOUNCED QUIETLY THAT A SCHEDULE FOR THE ISSUANCE
OF NEW IDENTITY CARDS (PRESUMABLY A PRIOR STEP BEFORE
ELECTORAL ROLLS COULD BE CONSIDERED) HAD A TARGET COMPLETION
DATE OF 1982. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT (AND GENERAL) PINOCHET'S SENSITIVITY TO ADMIRAL (AND JUNTA-MEMBER) MERINO'S MAY 20 ASSESSMENT THAT THE JUNTA WAS COMING CLOSE TO FULFILLING ITS OBJECTIVES (REF) WAS POINTEDLY HIGHLIGHTED IN TWO RECENT ADDRESSES. ON JUNE 7 PINOCHET SPOKE TO ASSEMBLED ARMY GENERALS AT INFANTRY DAY CEREMONIES. HE TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES THAT A NEW INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO MALIGN CHILE MADE IT ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE MILITARY STICK TOGETHER. THE CAMPAIGN HE SAID WOULD REQUIRE "INTENSIFIED, DIFFICULT NEW MEASURES" THESE MEASURES WERE NOT DEFINED, AND ARE THE SOURCE OF MUCH SPECULATION. HE SAID SOME HAD ERRED IN THINKING ELECTIONS WERE NEAR AT HAND. IN FACT THEY WERE "MANY YEARS AWAY". HE SPOKE ABOUT THE NEED FOR ALL CHILEANS TO STICK TOGETHER UNTIL "NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION" HAD BEEN COMPLETED, ADDING AMBIGUOUSLY THAT "EVEN THE FINEST GENERAL COULD HONORABLY RETIRE TO HIS HOME, SURE THAT OTHERS WOULD FILL HIS PLACE". PINOCHET STRESSED THAT THE ARMY, AS THE OLDEST INSTITUTION IN THE COUNTRY, HAD ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY. (WE JUDGE THIS TO BE A REMINDER TO THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE THAT THE INFANTRY IS THE BASE UPON WHICH ALL DEPEND.)

3. THE MANY DANGLING INSINUATIONS LEFT FROM THESE REMARKS, CAUSED A RUMOR THAT PINOCHET'S SPEECH TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMISSION JUNE 9 WOULD CONTAIN SIGNIFICANT ANNOUNCEMENTS. IT DID
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NOT. PINOCHET REHASHED THE STANDARD LINE (THE SINS OF THE PAST AND THE NEED FOR A NEW, "PROTECTED" DEMOCRACY) AND SAID HE WOULD ASK THE COMMISSION TO GIVE HIM A PROGRESS REPORT EVERY TWO MONTHS. HE SAID THAT THE COMMISSION SHOULD CONTINUE WORKING ON A DRAFT CONSTITUTIONAL ACT CODIFYING JUNTA DECREES ON THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE POWERS OF GOVERNMENT.

4. IN AN APPARENTLY UNRELATED STEP, THE GOC ANNOUNCED JUNE 3 THAT THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF IDENTIFICATION AND CIVIL REGISTRY HAD A TENTATIVE TIMETABLE FOR ISSUING NEW NATIONAL IDENTITY CARNETS IN A PROCESS DUE TO BEGIN IN 1979 AND COMPLETED IN 1982. THIS SCHEDULE ALREADY SHOWED SLIPPAGE FROM THE 1981 COMPLETION DATE MENTIONED LAST YEAR. ADMIRAL MERINO HAD REMINDED CHILEANS THAT FALSE CARDS ABOUNDED AND NEW ONES WERE A PRECONDITION TO SETTING UP NEW VOTING ROLLS (REF TEL). IT WILL BE

RECALLED THAT THE GOC DESTROYED THE OLD ROLLS WHICH WERE
RIFE WITH FRAUD IN 1974.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 4876

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S PUSH TO INCREASE
HIS POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF THE JUNTA AND WIDER
PRESSURES ON THE PRESIDENT TO PUT INTO PLACE THE
NEW DEMOCRACY TO WHICH HE SO FREQUENTLY HAS REFERRED
ARE INTER-RELATED. THE PRICE PINOCHET PAYS FOR BUILD-
ING HIS PERSONAL POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF HIS COLLEAGUES
IN THE OTHER SERVICES IS THEIR PROPORTIONATELY DECREASED
INTEREST IN SUPPORTING THE ARMY-BACKED PRESIDENTIAL
REGIME OF PINOCHET IN WHICH THEIR REPRESENTATION AND
IMPORTANCE HAS DWINDLED. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CHANGED
MOOD, IN JANUARY 1976 THE THREE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS
(APPAARENTLY ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE) ORGANIZED A SHOW
OF SOLIDARITY BEHIND PINOCHET. EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER
PINOCHET HIMSELF IS RATHER POINTEDLY CALLING FOR
MILITARY UNITY, AND WITH HIS OBVIOUS DIG AT MERINO
LETS ALL SEE THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE
JUNTA. AT THE SAME TIME, PINOCHET MORE AND MORE
OBVIOUSLY TAKES ON THE ROLE OF THE AUTHORITARIAN
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LEADER, SPEAKING DOWN TO HIS FLOCK, AND BESTOWING OR
WITHHOLDING HIS BLESSINGS.

6. IN RETROSPECT THE REAL IMPORT OF ADMIRAL MERINO'S
STATEMENTS AT VALPARAISO RESTS NOT SO MUCH IN THE
WORDS (HE SET NO TIMETABLE FOR ELECTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE)
OR ON THE TONE (ALTHOUGH HE WAS OBVIOUSLY HINTING AT
SOMETHING). RATHER HE PROVIDED THE FIRST PUBLIC PEG
ON WHICH TO HANG PENT UP DEBATE ON BASIC POLITICAL/
INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS. HIS REMARKS (AND PINOCHET'S
REBUTTAL) OPEN THE WAY FOR DISCUSSION ON TIMETABLES.
THE MEDIA RESPONSE ALONE IS REVEALING. STAID "EL
MERCURIO" CONTRASTED "ECONOMIC DYNAMISM/POLITICAL
IMMOBILITY" (MAY 29) IN EDITORY ARTURO FONTAINE'S
INCREASINGLY DARING SUNDAY EDITORIALS (ON JUNE 12
FONTAINE WENT SO FAR AS TO CALL FOR A RETURN TO THE
RULE OF LAW, DUE PROCESS, AND DROPPING THE STATE OF
SIEGE), NEWSWEEKLIES RAN INTERPRETIVE STORIES AND
INTERVIEWS WITH CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEEMEN AND
OTHER TAME CIVILIAN FIGURES; PRESS COVERAGE WAS
AMPLE. THERE IS NO QUESTION: PINOCHET IS FEELING
SOME HEAT FROM A VARIETY OF SECTORS.

7. IT IS POSSIBLE THUT TODAY'S TENSIONS WILL BE
SUBMERGED, IN THE FACE OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE
AND RESULTING ISOLATION, JUST AS IN THE PAST.
CERTAINLY PINOCHET APPEARS IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER
OF LOSING POWER; EVEN WERE HE TO DO SO, HIS
SUCCESSORS WOLD SHARE MOST OF HIS POLICY OBJECTIVES.
BUT DIFFERENCES, AND WITH THEM THE POSSIBILITY
OF INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AND MOVEMENT APPEAR TO
BE EMERGING.
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